

AROUND THE STATE

150 years of farming in Cootamundra

230 guests filled the Cootamundra Town Hall on Tuesday 9 August to celebrate the role of agriculture in the community's sesqui centenary celebrations. Federal Member Alby Schultz paid tribute to the farming families and industries that have been synonymous with agriculture in the area.

NSW Farmers President Fiona Simson addressed the crowd at her first official event, thanking the Cootamundra District Council for allowing her to be part of such a fabulous occasion.

The night was made possible by extremely generous sponsorship from

both the local community and the NSW Farmers Business Partners and Sponsors, with local Cootamundra meat processor GM Scott, the major sponsor of the event.

District Council Chairman Peter McClintock and his wife Monica organised the event.

'Raising awareness of the role that agriculture has and continues to play in contributing to local communities is important,' Mr McClintock said.

Comedian Rod Gregory aka 'The Old Fella' fresh from success on Australia's Got Talent entertained the crowd into the evening.



Cootamundra branch president Peter McClintock, President Fiona Simson and comedian Rod Gregory (in the hat) at the celebration dinner. Photo Courtesy Cootamundra Herald.

Goat Members head to Dubbo



By Bruce Currey -
Western Division

A large contingent of Western Division members had input into sustaining a positive future for goat enterprises at the recent Goat Industry Conference held in Dubbo.

The theme for this year's Conference was 'Maintaining Momentum' and an impressive lineup of speakers talked about ways to build on the current success of the NSW Goat Industry.

NLIS and animal health headlined the conference, with Western Division members having their input on important issues like rangeland goat identification, live exports and the availability of animal health products for goats.

Western Division member Rick Gates said the conference voted to support the current NLIS requirements for managed and unmanaged goats.



NSW Farmers Member Fiona Lander was elected to a new goat committee that will address Agvet Chemical issues.

Mr Gates said producers harvesting rangeland goats across the west of the

state are concerned about pressure for them to start tagging all stock.

"There are a number of factors that make tagging rangeland goats impractical. They are a moving population and can weigh up to 110 kilos," Mr Gates said.

He said there are occupational health and safety reasons why rangeland goats shouldn't be tagged and that there is not sufficient infrastructure in place to enable this degree of intensive animal handling.

Unmanaged goats are currently not required to be tagged when they go direct to slaughter and for property transfers they are identified as a mob for the NLIS Scheme.

After a substantial period of service to the committee, Mr Gates stood down as NSW Farmers Goat Committee Chair and Katie Davies was elected to this position, with Floss Howard elected to the Deputy and NLIS Advisory Committee roles.

Shearer shortage must be addressed

NSW Farmers will look at new ways to target young people in order to address the alarming shortage of shearers and shed hands in the wool industry, with a motion passed at Annual Conference calling on all sectors of the industry to commit to a plan to address the shortfall.

Wool Committee Chair John Manwaring says the numbers of shearers have fallen much faster than the drop in sheep numbers.

"Each shearer now has 5,000 more sheep to shear each year compared to 10 years ago, based on ABARES/ABS data. That's alarming when you consider that over that same decade, sheep numbers have more than halved.

"Conditions in sheds should be improving in line with higher commodity prices, but competition from the mining industry and an ageing workforce are driving numbers down.

"Australian Wool Innovation has implemented training programs, however it's become clear that more needs to be done," Mr Manwaring said.

NSW Farmers will encourage various sectors of the industry to take a cooperative approach to encourage young people into the industry, retain the current workforce, and protect the wool industry's future.

What is being mined in Tamworth?



By Darren Greentree -
Central North

The Tamworth District Council will host a Mining Information meeting in Loomberah on August 31 following news of exploration licences being granted over a large part of the shire.

Loomberah farmer Kevin Tongue said there is an air of uncertainty around the proposed exploration activities and the local farming community needs more information.

"Farmers just want to get all the facts

on what activities will occur as well as rights and obligations related to access agreements," Mr Tongue said.

"We actually don't even know what the company involved will be mining for."

The exploration licences do not specify what they are looking for other than a possible 81 minerals.

Mr Tongue said the proposed exploration area is south east of Tamworth, stretching from Nemingha to Nundle.

"The meeting will be important as an information meeting for local landowners; we don't want a protest meeting. It's about getting the right information and

clearing up some of the uncertainty," Mr Tongue said.

NSW Farmers President Fiona Simson will be the keynote speaker at the District Council meeting and will provide the latest information on access agreements and mining policy.

The District Council also plans to invite representatives from the mining company that has applied for the exploration licences and the Minerals Council.

The meeting will be held at 7.00pm on August 31 at the Loomberah Hall. For more information contact Darren Greentree on 0427 411 214.

THE FORECAST JUST GOT BETTER.

The Essential Energy StormTracker is a great way to keep an eye on the weather, with lightning strike and rainfall information now on the one screen. So to stay prepared for storms, visit essentialenergy.com.au/stormtracker every day.

